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FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1939
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 8628
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS ABUJA 000176

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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AF/W FOR ASILSKI, DHEFLIN
DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR-AGAMA, EXIM-JRICHTER, TDA-EEBONG
TREASURY FOR PETERS AND HALL
USDOC FOR 3317/ITA/OA/KBURRESS, 3130/USFC/OIO/ANESA/DHARRIS
DOE FOR CGAY AND GPERSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE TO VISIT THE U.S.

[¶1.](#) (U) This is an action request, please see paragraph 6.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) Summary: Speaker of the House of Representatives, Oladimeji Bankole (of the ruling People's Democratic Party) hosted a working lunch for Ambassador, PolCouns, EconCouns, PolOff and USAID Officer. Bankole expressed interest in visiting Washington February 18 - 22 to meet with Executive branch officials, non-governmental organizations, and representatives of the American business community. Bankole will seek meetings with Legislative branch officials, including Speaker Pelosi, at a later date, possibly in late March. (Note: Bankole understands Congress will not be in session February 18-22. End Note.) End Summary.

[¶3.](#) (SBU) Bankole would like to meet with members of the Executive Branch, including representatives from State, NSC, and USAID. The Speaker would also like to meet with members of the American business community, including the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) and Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), to look for ways to encourage American investment in the non-petroleum sector in Nigeria. Post believes the Speaker would also benefit from meeting with USAID-funded NGOs National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI), et al given the Speaker's interest in political party reform.

[¶4.](#) (SBU) PAS is investigating the possibility of creating a VolVis program for the Speaker's follow-up visit (we understand that there is not enough time to implement a program prior to his February trip). (FYI: In a January 24 conversation with PolCouns, Bankole said he was considering dates in late March.) In addition to meetings with appropriate Congressional leaders, such a PAS program could facilitate meetings with the Library of Congress/CRS and other program entities which AF/PPD or others could recommend, and which could provide technical assistance on capacity building. The Speaker stated he would be interested in training opportunities for Nigerian legislators, which he said the National Assembly would be willing to fund.

[¶5.](#) (SBU) Comment: Bankole came into office in November following the removal of the past Speaker, Patricia Etteh, because of corruption allegations. He and those who brought

him to office committed themselves to making the Nigerian House of Representatives a far more independent and significant body than the much browbeaten and often ignored institution it had previously been. In the past, the House usually rubber-stamped legislation coming from the executive; now Bankole and his supporters want it take control of the budget and act as a real check on the Presidency. End comment.

¶6. (U) Action Request: Post requests Department's assistance in arranging the suggested meetings for Bankole's February visit.

SANDERS